

**RULES
OF
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
FAMILY ASSISTANCE DIVISION**

**CHAPTER 1240-1-16
VERIFICATION PROCEDURES**

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1240-1-16-.01 INTRODUCTION TO VERIFICATION PROCEDURES.

- (1) Definition: Verification is the process of confirming or substantiating information provided by the applicant/recipient.
- (2) For cases of ineligibility, the worker may render a decision based on the HH/AGs unverified statement.
- (3) In order to render a decision of eligibility, the worker must be able to make a firm determination of eligibility based on verified points of eligibility.
- (4) If a client fails to meet any one point of eligibility, he/she is not eligible for any benefits.
- (5) Proper documentation and accurate verification are crucial in reducing the QC error rate. The agency must obtain adequate verification for all items that are mandated at application, reported changes, and at recertification, to assure that eligibility and level of benefits have been correctly determined. All pertinent factors pertaining to the case must be fully documented in the case file.
 - (a) The worker must substantiate statements made by the HH/AG on the application, regarding the nonfinancial eligibility factors, which must be verified prior to approval of a HH/AG for benefits. Verification must be obtained by documentary evidence, through collateral contacts, or by a home visit to the HH/AG.
 - (b) Verification required for determining AFDC eligibility shall not delay the household's Food Stamp benefits if the worker has sufficient verification within 30 days of the date of application for Food Stamp requirements, but does not have sufficient verification to meet the PA requirements.

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106; 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.02 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING VERIFICATION. Securing adequate verification is a joint responsibility between the HH/AG and the worker. The HH/AG has the primary responsibility for providing documentary evidence to support its statement and to resolve any questionable information. The HH/AG may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, or through an authorized representative. The worker must accept any reasonable documentary evidence and must primarily be concerned with how adequately the

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verification proves the statements on the application. If it would be impossible for the HH/AG to obtain documentary evidence in a timely manner or if the HH/AG has presented insufficient documentation, the eligibility worker must either offer to assist the HH/AG in obtaining the documentary evidence or shall use a collateral contact or home visit.

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.03 VERIFICATION AT INITIAL APPLICATION. At application the worker must examine both financial and nonfinancial factors of eligibility for Food Stamps and AFDC. Information provided by the applicant/recipient on each factor must be examined and must be verified.

- (1) Identity
 - (a) For AFDC purposes, the identity of the person making application and all aid group members must be verified prior to approval.
 - (b) For Food Stamp purposes, the identity of the person making the application shall be verified. Where an authorized representative applies on behalf of a household, the identity of both the authorized representative and the head of the household shall be verified through documentary evidence, or if unavailable, a collateral contact.
- (2) Residence. There is no durational requirement for either Food Stamps or AFDC.
 - (a) AFDC. The aid group must be living in the State.
 - (b) Food Stamps. Households must be living in the county in which they file application. In unusual cases, such as migrants and farm workers, homeless households, or households newly arrived in the county, if verification of residency cannot be readily accomplished, the worker may accept the household's statement that it resides in the county.
- (3) Alien Status. In both the Food Stamp and AFDC programs, the worker must verify alien status if members of the HH/AG are identified on the application of aliens. If the proper INS documentation is not available, the worker must accept other forms of documentation or information from INS that the aliens are eligible aliens.
- (4) Social Security Numbers. Social Security numbers reported to the agency by the HH/AU must be verified for each HH/AU member, in both the Food Stamp and AFDC programs.
- (5) Household Size /Aid Group Composition. In Food Stamps, the number of persons in the household must be verified prior to approval. In AFDC, the worker must verify that persons for whom AFDC is requested live together and that the person requesting AFDC has responsibility for the aid group.
- (6) Resources
- (7) Gross Non-Exempt Income
- (8) Medical Expenses - Food Stamps
- (9) Dependent Care Costs

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- (10) Shelter Costs - Food Stamps
- (11) Loans
- (12) Other Mandatory Verification - AFDC Only
 - (a) Relationship
 - (b) Living with a Specific Relative
 - (c) Deprivation of Parental Support/Care
 - (d) Age
 - (e) Marital Status
 - (f) School Attendance
 - (g) Striker Status
- (13) Questionable Information. For both AFDC and Food Stamps, the worker must verify factors other than those listed above if such factors are questionable and would affect the HH/AGs eligibility or level of benefits. Questionable information can be information on the application which is:
 - (a) Inconsistent with statements made by the applicant;
 - (b) Inconsistent with other information on the application or previous application;
 - (c) Inconsistent with information received by the worker.
 - (d) Questionable information is not limited to the above three criteria if in the prudent judgment of the worker and/or supervisor the information provided by the household appears to be unreasonable when considered in relation to the other household circumstances.

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; PL 99-198; 51 Federal Register 98 (May 21, 1986); 7 CFR 273.2; 7 CFR 273.6; 34 CFR 206.10, 232.10 and 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982. Amendment filed March 28, 1983; effective April 27, 1983. Amendment filed May 17, 1983; effective June 16, 1983. Amendment filed September 29, 1986; effective December 29, 1986.

1240-1-16-.04 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE.

Authority: TCA §14-8-106; PL 97-35; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 28, 1981; effective October 13, 1981. Repeal and new rule filed December 10, 1981; effective January 25, 1982. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.05 VERIFICATION OF REPORTED CHANGES. In both Food Stamps and AFDC, recipients are required to report changes during their certification/approval period within 10 days of the date the change becomes known to the HH/AG. Changes reported by the client/discovered by the agency between redeterminations of eligibility are subject to the same verification procedures/requirements that apply at the initial determination of eligibility, except that previously verified gross income which has changed by \$25 or less, or the source of which

(Rule 1240-1-16-.05 (continued))

has not changed, need not be reverified. Such changes will be taken into account in determining eligibility and amount of benefits and any necessary change in allotment/grant eligibility will be authorized. If the change is a request to add an individual to the aid group, this individual will be treated as an applicant and all eligibility factors for this person will be verified as for any other new applicant.

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.20. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.06 VERIFICATION AT RECERTIFICATION. In Food Stamps and AFDC, the worker must examine both financial and nonfinancial factors of eligibility. Information provided by the HH/AG must be verified. The verification requirements are not the same for both programs. The verification requirements for recertification/redetermination are described in this section.

- (1) Food Stamps. For Food Stamp purposes, any information, changed or unchanged, may be verified at recertification if it is a factor in determining eligibility and/or the benefit level. The following items must be verified at recertification:
 - (a) Identity
 - (b) Residency
 - (c) Household Size
 - (d) Alien Status
 - (e) Social Security Number
 - (f) Income
 - (g) Liquid Resources
 - (h) Dependent Care Expenses
 - (i) Medical Expenses
 - (j) Shelter Costs
 - (k) Actual Utility Costs
 - (l) Entitlement to the Utility Standard
 - (m) Questionable Information
 - (n) Loans
- (2) AFDC. An AFDC grant must continue unchanged until it is established that eligibility for a lesser or an increased amount exists, or until it is established that all or part of an aid group is no longer eligible for assistance. A redetermination of eligibility cannot be considered complete until the facts of the situation are obtained and recorded, and an authorization is entered into the system: continue a grant unchanged; continue an increased or decreased grant; or terminate assistance to be effective a

(Rule 1240-1-16-.06, continued)

particular month. For AFDC purposes, at redetermination, factors of eligibility subject to change must be verified as follows:

- (a) Residence
- (b) Composition of AG
- (c) WIN
- (d) Deprivation of Support
- (e) Living with a Relative
- (f) Enumeration - SSNs
- (g) Pregnancy
- (h) Gross Income
- (i) Deductible Expenses
- (j) Resources
- (k) Transfer of Assets
- (l) Striker Status

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2 (f)(8)(i)(c); 45 CFR 233.20. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Amendment filed August 17, 1981; effective September 16, 1982. Amendment filed May 17, 1983; effective June 16, 1983.

1240-1-16-.07 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; PL 97-35; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Repeal and new rule filed December 10, 1981; effective January 25, 1982. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.08 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.09 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106 and 14-8-109; PL 97-35; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Repeal and new rule filed December 10, 1981; effective January 25, 1982. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.10 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.

1240-1-16-.11 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

Authority: TCA §§14-8-106, 14-8-109, and 14-27-104; 7 CFR 273.2; 45 CFR 233.10. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed August 15, 1980; effective September 29, 1980. Repeal filed August 17, 1982; effective September 16, 1982.